

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 NEA-10 ISO-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 COME-00

EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 SAJ-01

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /156 W
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R 231548Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8527

INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

AMCONSUL NICE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PLAB

SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: TRADE UNION
POSITIONS

1. SUMMARY: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES CGT, CFDT, AND FEN (EDUCATION) HAVE DECLARED SUPPORT FOR COMMON CANDIDATE OF THE LEFT, FRANCOIS MITTERRAND. FORCE OUVRIERE AND CFTC, FOLLOWING TRADITIONAL LINE, ANNOUNCED THEY WOULD ENDORSE NO CANDIDATE. CGC (CADRES), DECLARING ITSELF "NEUTRAL BUT NOT INACTIVE", HAS SUBMITTED QUESTIONNAIRES TO ALL CANDIDATES, PROMISING TO MAKE REPLIES PUBLIC 23 APRIL. END SUMMARY.

2. CLEAR PRIORITY GIVEN BY PRINCIPAL PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ISSUES HEIGHTENS
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SIGNIFICANCE OF ELECTORAL POSITIONS BEING TAKEN BY

LABOR ORGANIZATIONS AS FOLLOWS:

A. CGT

PREDICTABLY CGT NOT ONLY CALLED ON ALL WORKERS TO SUPPORT MITTERRAND AS COMMON LEFT CANDIDATE, BUT ALSO MOBILIZED ITS CONSIDERABLE PROPAGANDA RESOURCES TO THAT END. WHILE CGT CONTINUES TO STRESS THEME THAT COMMON PROGRAM IS RALLYING POINT FOR WORKERS, FARMERS, CADRES, MERCHANTS AND ARTISANS, IT CAREFULLY AVOIDS RAISING EXPECTATION OF FULL AND IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMON PROGRAM IN EVENT OF MITTERRAND VICTORY. AS THOUGH TO COMPENSATE FOR THIS RESTRAINT, CGT DRAWS PICTURE OF LONG RUN "FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIC REFORMS" AS MAJOR DIVIDEND OF VICTORY OF LEFT. BASIC TACTIC HERE IS TO PREPARE GROUND FOR PLEA FOR LABOR PEACE IN EVENT OF MITTERRAND VICTORY - SINCE COMMON PROGRAM PROMISES WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT, PARTICULARLY UNDER CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

B. CFDT

CFDT SUPPORT FOR MITTERRAND HAS BEEN COUCHED IN PERSPECTIVE OF LARGER UNION OF LEFT, EXTENDING BEYOND ADVOCATES OF COMMON PROGRAM, TO INCLUDE PROPONENTS OF AUTOGESTION, AS WELL AS TRADE UNION CONFEDERATIONS. CONSISTENT WITH PAST, CFDT RESISTED REPEATED APPEALS FROM CGT TO SIGN JOINT DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF COMMON CANDIDATE OF THE LEFT - THEREBY SERVING NOTICE THAT IT INTENDS TO MAINTAIN ITS FREEDOM TO ACT ACCORDING TO ITS OWN PHILOSOPHY AFTER ELECTIONS. INTERESTINGLY, CFDT ABSTAINED FROM DIRECT EXHORTATIONS TO THE RANK AND FILE TO VOTE LEFT, LEAVING THAT DECISION TO LOCAL UNIONS. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH CFDT IDEOLOGY, WHICH ENCOURAGES MEMBERS TO MAKE OWN DECISIONS.

C. FORCE OUVRIERE

IN CONTRAST WITH CFDT, FO LEADERSHIP CAN AFFORD TO BE MORE RELAXED IN FOLLOWING TRADITIONAL LINE OF NOT ENDORSING ANY CANDIDATE. THIS POSITION IS CONSISTENT WITH TRADITIONAL FO COMMITMENT TO UNION INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY, MAINTAINING THAT VOTE IS RESPONSIBILITY OF

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THE FRENCHMAN AS CITIZEN, RATHER THAN AS TRADE UNION MEMBER. FO MEMBERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY AND OVERWHELMINGLY VOTED SOCIALIST - A PATTERN WELL KNOWN TO MITTERRAND. INTERESTINGLY, HOWEVER, FO ISSUED SECOND STATEMENT ON L9 APRIL URGING "MEMBERS AND WORKERS IN GENERAL TO PARTICIPATE IN LARGE NUMBERS IN A CONSULTATION WHOSE IMPORTANCE AND CONSEQUENCES ANYONE CAN MEASURE". FO APPEAL WENT ON TO CAUTION THAT FO ATTACHMENT TO INDEPENDENCE FROM PARTIES AND GOVERNMENTS DOES NOT MEAN LACK OF INTEREST IN DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS. "FO WOULD NOT STAY NEUTRAL IF, FOR ANY REASON, DEMOCRACY WERE TO BE THREATENED".

D. FEN

TRADITIONALLY SOCIALIST, FEN CALLED FOR A VOTE FOR MITTERRAND, BUT KEPT PREVIOUS DISTANCE FROM COMMON PROGRAM AND ASSERTED ITS INDEPENDENCE OF ACTION IN POST-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ELECTION PERIOD.

E. CFTC

CFTC ABSTAINED FROM ANY ENDORSEMENT BUT URGED MEMBERS TO GO TO THE POLLS. IN CFTC CASE, THIS IS TANTAMOUNT TO SUPPORT FOR THE RIGHT.

F. CGC (CADRES)

TAKING A LEAF FROM GOMPERS, CGC SET OUT TO DETERMINE WHICH OF CANDIDATES IS CADRES' BEST FRIEND, ASKING EACH TO COMPLETE AND RETURN A QUESTIONNAIRE. CGC PROMISED TO PUBLISH REPLIES AS GUIDE TO MEMBERS. THOUGH TRADI-

TIONALLY CADRES HAVE VOTED RIGHT, A RAPIDLY INCREASING NUMBER ARE CONCLUDING THAT, UNDER REGIME OF LEFT, RELIANCE ON CADRES MIGHT BE HEAVIER THAN HAS BEEN THE CASE UNDER GAULLISTS. PC, PS, AS WELL AS CGT AND CFDT, HAVE DIRECTED CONSIDERABLE PROPAGANDA EFFORT TOWARDS CADRES. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL PROVIDE SOME MEASURE OF THEIR SUCCESS IN WOOLING CADRES TO THE LEFT.

3. COMMENT: AS IN OTHER DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES, UNION "GUIDANCE" ON HOW TO VOTE HAS AT BEST ONLY A MARGINAL INFLUENCE. UNION MEMBERS ARE EXPOSED TO SAME PRESSURES, INFLUENCES AND CONSIDERATIONS AS REST OF CITIZENRY. FOREGOING POSITIONS ARE THUS SIGNIFICANT PRIMARILY FOR WHAT THEY REVEAL IN THE WAY OF THE KIND OF ALIGNMENT THESE LABOR ORGANIZATIONS ARE LIKELY TO DEVELOP, AND THE ATTITUDES THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO TAKE TOWARDS THE NEW PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENT. TRADE UNION BEHAVIOR IN THE POST-ELECTION PERIOD MAY, IN FACT, PROVE TO BE A GREAT DEAL MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE VOTING PATTERNS OF UNION MEMBERS.

4. ONE OF THE MORE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN TO DATE IS THE LABOR PEACE WHICH HAS RESULTED FROM CGT-CFDT CONCERN TO AVOID ANY ACTION LIKELY TO SCARE AWAY MODERATE SUPPORT FOR MITTERRAND. THE CGT-CFDT HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED TO CANCEL THEIR TRADITIONAL MAY DAY PARADE -- YET ANOTHER POSSIBLE INDICATION OF HOW CLOSE THE LEFT EXPECTS THE ELECTIONS TO BE.

IRWIN

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